PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE

COASTAL AREA ATARI USERS' GROUP

an independent computer users' group

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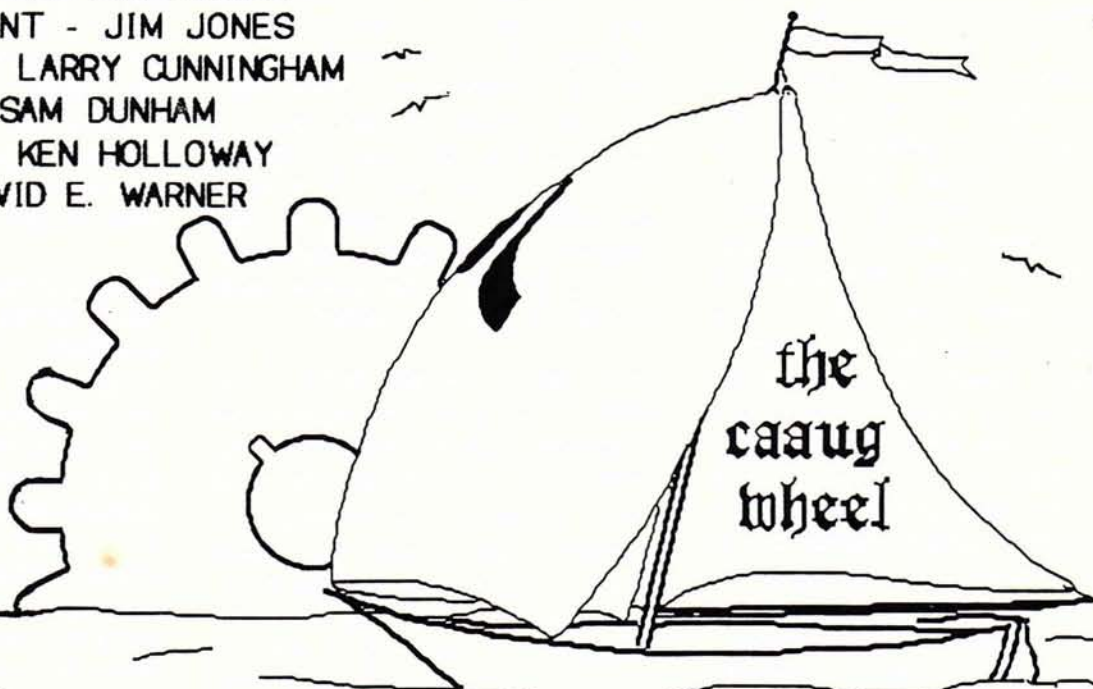
IN THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENTS' CORNER

by Lee Hutcheson

CONTEST- I can not believe, after all the great clues which I gave, that no one was able to correctly answer my computer trivia question and claim the software offered as the prize. I am torn between giving another clue and extending the contest, or just revealing the answer in this article. So, I decided to do both. I will reveal the answer, then extend the contest by asking different questions. The question from last month was "What was the first documented case of sex discrimination practiced by a computer; not including any discrimination initiated by a programmer." I am surprised that no one remembered the brief (you will get the pun later) but widely circulated report which appeared in numerous magazines and newspapers during 1982 and 1983. The incident occurred in Russia. Russian scientists discovered that one of their computers worked fine when there were only men in the room, but started spouting gibberish whenever a woman entered the room. Fairly typical behavior for an adolescent boy, but quite unusual for a computer. Their research finally revealed that synthetic fibers in the women's underwear were disrupting the system. The women programmers were all required to switch to woolen underwear and everything was fine from then on. Unfortunately, none of the reports told exactly how they got to the bottom (excuse the pun) of this

mystery. Now, lets get on with the new questions. The prize can be claimed by the first person to correctly define the following: 1. MTBF. 2. MTTR. 3. EIA. 4. LOGO. 5. ANSI. 6. GIGO. 7. WYSIWYG. 8. CAAUG. 9. ZULU. 10. IC. Entries should be addressed to COMPUTER, P.O. BOX 5142, BILOXI, MS 39534-0098. Multiple entries are permitted. In the event of ties, the entry with the earliest postmark wins. You must be a member to enter. The decision of the judge is final and I am the judge. I realize that anyone who owned one of the earlier Commodore computers has an unfair advantage with the first two, but gee, I figured they should get a break somewhere. Remember, a free computer strategy game goes to the winner. Be quick, this contest is just too easy!

MAIL ORDER HOUSE BITES THE DUST - Some of you may have ordered from PC Network Inc. They are (were) big and had very competitive prices. It appears their prices may have been a little too competitive. They have just filed under Chapter 11 leaving a lot of people holding the bag for equipment ordered but not received. If you recently ordered something and sent a check you are out of luck, unless of course it has not been cashed and you can stop payment. If you charged a purchase on your credit card and did not receive the item

there is still hope. Contact your credit card institution immediately if you have not yet paid the bill including that charge. If you sent equipment back to them for repair don't despair, it is still your property. I would, however, advise you to request its return promptly. You should get it back. The company has declared an intent to regroup and try to still stay in business, although on a much smaller scale. It is a shock when one of the big companies goes, but such occurrences are not really so rare. Computer related businesses have become extremely competitive and the failure rate is high. You might be well advised to use credit cards or even better COD for your orders.

PUBLIC DOMAIN - This term to many implies inferior or useless programs. While there are such programs in the public domain, it also includes some very useful and quite high quality programs. Both commercial and public domain encompass a wide range of quality. I have unfortunately purchased some commercial programs whose greatest value was the disk on which it came, since it could be reformated and used for something worthwhile. On the other hand, I have found a public domain business program, which is in our library, to be superior to several commercial programs with which it i comparable. I can also think of programs which were in the

public domain before being sold as commercial programs. There are a variety of reasons for which an author might release his work into the public domain, including the high cost of production and distribution which usually necessitates the backing of a company. It is always worth your while to check with the group librarian and other knowledgeable persons to see what is in the public domain before rushing out to buy a commercial program. Moreover, there are many programs in the public domain which can enhance the performance of your commercial programs. These include such programs as overlays for spread sheets, fonts for word processors, or data disks for publishing programs. The recent receipt of such a program is what prompted me to write on the subject. For you Print Shop fans, we have just received a data disk with 100 new and original icons from Gaetan Houle, a programmer who lives in Saskatchewan Canada. He has placed his work into the public domain as 'Free-Ware'. In other words it can be given to others without having to give a royalty to him. There is a statement included which encourages anyone who finds the software of use to them to send the author $3.00 for his efforts. This is a common and very fair way for authors to get their work out to others and receive some compensation for their efforts, which may be considerable. For instance, Mr.

Houle has spent one and one half years completing these icons. The arrangement is also fair for the users of such programs. You only pay if the program is of use to you and the recommended charge is usually quite reasonable. Where can you get a deal like that for a commercial program? The catch for the programmer is that he/she depends entirely on the honesty of the people who receive the program. If you receive a program of this type and use it, I strongly encourage you to send something to the author. This encourages them and helps keep them financially able to develop more and better programs for us at reasonable prices. Every body wins on such a deal.

TECHNICAL ADVISORS - Thanks to those who responded to our survey handed out at the last general membership meeting. If you are interested in helping other group members with some aspect of computing but still have not advised me, be sure to call or write with the information. Soon we will be publishing the list of contacts for each of the special areas of interest. (ED Note: If you are still interested in becoming an advisor, the form is in this issue of the FOCUS!)

COMPUTER USERS' DAY 87 - Just another reminder to visit Edgewater Mall on the 26th and 27th of June to see the displays and demonstrations we will put on in cooperation with

other area user groups. We had a meeting with representatives from the other groups and found everyone really excited and looking forward to the event. Be a part of it by participating or coming to view it. Remember, our general membership meeting will be held there at 7:30 P.M. on the 26th. There are even special T-shirts being made for the event. They will cost approximately $5.50. If you want to reserve one, you must contact David Warner or myself before June 12. That's all till next month.

ERRATIC EDITORIALS
by David E. Warner

Well, another issue is being done and there is lots to talk about this time. Of course I missed the last general membership meeting because of a trip to San Antonio, and then up to Dallas for the AtariFest. I will go ahead and give an overview of the show and my impressions of it.

Pamela and I had planned on attending the show on Saturday at the Infomart in Dallas, but when we talked to one of the Dallas people coordinating the show, he said that Friday would be much better because it would be less crowded and we would be able to talk to the vendors. So, we headed up

COMPUTER USERS' DAY '87

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
DAVID E. WARNER   388-6159   VOICE
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The saga of the Dallas Show...

there Friday morning after a latter than planned start. Well, after some alternator trouble on the car, we made it up to the show a lot later than planned. But, things were still not that bad. I had put a pair of old clothes on for the drive and had brought a change of clothes with me for meeting these people. Pamela had done the same, except for buying a new dress for the show. Hey...this was a big deal, right? Atari Corporation and all. Wanted to make a good impression on them, right?

Well, we arrived dirty, tired, late, and myself covered with grease. We found a bathroom and cleaned up the best we could, and decided not to change. Heck, if they weren't impressed the way we were, what the hay.

The Dallas Group had gotten the prime location in the InfoMart. They were on the ground floor, and you could register for the show right in the main lobby. Tickets were $5.00 per person, and the kids got in free. They had a large show area, with about 35 booth spaces filled. There were several other rooms where discussions and presentations were held on a regular basis.

I guess my first reaction was "Gee, this isn't really such a big deal." I guess I had a much larger expectation and had not really thought about how large

a six or seven thousand square foot area really was. It's not that big really. Anyway, I started making my way from booth to booth, making excuses for the grease and all still on me. All of the people I met from the many different companies, were both knowledgeable and friendly. Most of them were having a great time, even though they had done it before.

The first negative thing I noticed was the fact that there were really very few actual major companies represented. Out of the 33 booths there...three were taken up by Atari, several by local users groups, and still several more by local Atari dealers. When you eliminated all of them, there were really about only 15 software and hardware companies represented. Analog and Antic were present with a booth, along with Aladdin magazine. Astra Systems, Intellect Systems, ICD, Inc., Hybrid Arts, Inc., WordPerfect Corp., SSI, Broderbund, Megamax, Seymor-Radix, SubLOGIC, Spectrum HoloByte, and Beckemeyer Development Tools, were some of the companies represented. I guess I was hoping for more of them.

Just some general comments: Hybrid Arts had their MIDI area set up, and I was not impressed. Almost the whole time I was there, they were doing more 'plinking' on keyboards, than showing any real musical capability of their software. The

game craze of the year MIDI Maze was running on about 12 ST computers. And everything good you may have heard about it is true. I will back up just a bit and tell you that Lee Pappas from Analog called ME the con artist because I was able to sell Atari on the GulfCoast (AKA Biloxi). Well, I don't want anyone to think that he isn't one also. I believe he spent most of his time at the show convincing either Sandi Austin from Atari, or someone else to cover his booth so that he could sneak down to play MIDI Maze. I do have photographic evidence to prove this point. I've got a nice shot of him sitting at the computer, next to my son and daughter and several other people...really into shooting each other up in the mazes. My son made a real impression on some as I heard someone shout "Who is the blue guy anyway?" Jason was just sitting at a corner, shooting anyone who came by. He actually won one round So, Lee, you said that you read every newsletter you get, hope you still think Biloxi is the Gold Coast of the USA. (Heh..Heh)

I think the greatest disappointment of the show for me, was the lack of anything new from Atari. They had a great looking booth, with a lot of computers, but the newest thing they had was the blitter chip. Heck guys, that's now OLD stuff, even though nobody owns one yet! How about the Mega's,

the PC's, the Laser Printers, etc? They've been talked about enough...let's see them on a regular basis at these shows!

All in all, the trip was worth it. I made several good contacts, talked to one of the guys who set the show up for the Dallas group and got some pointers from him, and got a feel for what one of these shows is really about. I came back convinced that we could easily match or exceed the Dallas show. I don't know what their final attendance figures were, but they were not good for the first day. Lesson learned: do not hold it on a Friday!

Remember: it is not really that far off...ours is scheduled for April 23 and 24 (Saturday and Sunday) 1988!

PASCAL NEWS

OSS is ready to release the long awaited Version 2 of Personal Pascal. It is in Beta release, and they have made an early offer to save time and money for users group members. If you are interested, the info will be at the meeting in the mall.

WHAT'S IN VERSION 2?

Almost every component of Personal Pascal has been upgraded. For starters, the 'manager' desktop has been expanded, offering more options.

For example, you can now specify where various files will come from (what drive, what directory)--especially handy for hard disk or ramdisk users and those with only one floppy disk. The Editor is an all-new, unique, GEM-enhanced version. The Compiler has those features you have been looking for. Arrays and records now have a maximum size of 16 MEGAbytes. READ and WRITE work with any kinds of files. The Library in Personal Pascal version 2 has undergone some facelifting. Turbo-compatible screen procedures have been added.

There are also several other programs available to help you with Pascal. Enter TACKLE BOX ST. It offers you an interface to each and every possible GEMDOS, BIOS, and XBIOS routine. With the program, it should be relatively easy to convert magazine listings of C programs into Personal Pascal. It also gives you a complete math library, a disassembler, a tutorial and so on. Along with all of that, 700 pages of documentation, three packed diskettes, a handy three ring binder, etc. Worth looking into if you are a Pascal programmer.

NEW ABACUS BOOKS FOR THE ST

Abacus Software has released two new books for the ST. ST for Beginners is self-explanatory. This book is for the first-time ST user - the one who just bought a

computer and doesn't know what to do next. Some dealers are selling this book with each new ST that goes out the door. Suggested retail price is $16.95.

ST Disk Drives - Inside and Out is more technical. It's a book with very in depth coverage of files, file structure, file programming techniques, disk drive hardware, and more. The reader will find this to be the 'internals' book for using a hard disk, floppy disk or RAM disk. Suggested retail price is $24.95.

IBM COMPATIBILITY FOR THE ATARI ST

Avant-Garde's IBM PC emulator for the Atari 520 and 1040 ST is now available for purchase. PC-Ditto imitates an IBM PC with monochrome, color, serial ports and parallel ports (or an IBM PC XT with optional Atari hard disk). The suggested retail price is $89.95. This price includes a free update and full support from Avant-Garde Systems.

They are offering a users' group discount of $72.00 per copy with an order of 10 or more copies. They have also included a copy of the programs that will run with the emulator. They are being real careful after the MS-EM emulator fiasco. They will only ship COD, so that you have the item in your hand before you

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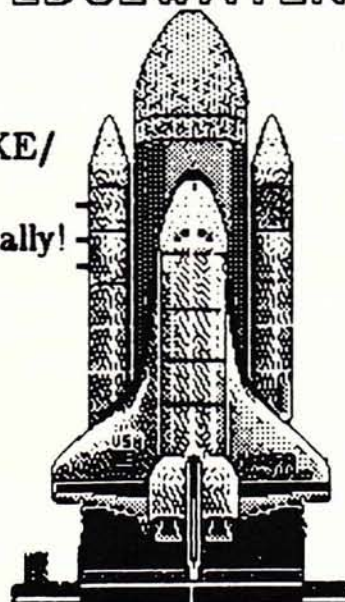
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pay for it. Personally, I want to see it run before I would spend any money on it. After the first fire, its hard to light the match again!

MICHTRON RELEASES NEW PRODUCTS FOR THE ST

MichTron has announced some new products for the ST. GoldRunner is an exciting new game from England. It includes engaging in open space aerial combat, strafing a Ring World's landscape in search of the power source that will destroy the planet, and of course, saving the human race. You are not totally alone in this quest. The whimsical voice of your on-board computer (sounding a little like David Bowey) is your constant companion. Suggested retail price: $39.95.

GFA-VECTOR, is a three dimensional graphics program for the GFA-BASIC Interpreter. It allows you to create and manipulate astounding images and optical effects, and place them in your own GFA BASIC programs. It also allows real time animations. Suggested retail: $49.95 and requires GFA-BASIC Interpreter.

MAKE IT MOVE, is a graphics animation program which allows you to breath life into all types of art work on your ST. Combined with a paint program, creates an excellent, inexpensive graphics system for generating and displaying colorful business

reports, attention getting commercial messages for your store or booth, professional looking titles and animation sequences for home and industrial video recordings, exciting classroom demonstrations, visual presentation of architectural and other designs, computer art exhibitions, and hundreds of other applications. Suggested retail: $49.95.

M-CACHE, is an incredibly handy disk utility for owners of ST hard drives. No suggested retail price listed, but I believe it is in the $49.95 range.

ST-DIGIDRUM, turns your computer into a sizzling, digitized drum machine with the capability of syncopated Jazz beats, all the way to the martial flare of a staccato snare, digitally on your ST. Suggested retail: $39.95.

STUFF, is a package of 21 different utility programs for all ST users, from the novice to the professional programmer. Suggested retail $39.95.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I received a few letters in the mail the other day and thought I would share them with you:

Dear Sir!

I have a great request. It was really difficult for me to find the address of your club. Mr.

President. I hope you will just return my request.

I have got ...... computer, ATARI 130XE + 1050 (standard). But it is difficult to get software and the books for it. There are not so much information about this computer in Poland or the access to this kind of literature is difficult.

I kindly ask you to send me magazines like Analog, Antic etc. or books, or descriptions and instructions concerning computer programs and computer games or a few blank disks. I am very keen on computer science and computers, but I have no access to software. Besides, I would like to correspond with you or with other club members. Perhaps I could send you something as a souvenir from Poland.

I hope you answer my letter. Thanks for any help!

Greetings for you and club members.

Yours sincerely
Marek Paskiewicz
UL Walczaka 88/5 66-400
Gorzow WLKP
Poland

A.U.C. Brainwave Michael Schuetz
Fritz-Kalle_Str. 26 6200
Wiesbaden WEST GERMANY

Dear folks from CAAUG.

Our CAAUG members have varying degrees of experience in computers - from novice to expert. Volunteers knowledgeable in various areas are needed to assist our members with questions or problems that may come up. If you are available and willing to help, please fill out the appropriate sections of this form.

AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE - INDICATE BIT OR 8 BIT		

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Send this form to:

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or return to any CAAUG officer.

Lee Hutcheson, President
CAAUG

Here now is the third issue of our Newsletter. We do plan some changes for the distribution of it in the future. We now offer a one year subscription (6 issues of the Brainwave Gazette) for $12 (including airmail costs). Maybe some of your Club members are interested in obtaining their own copies of the newsletter? ....

Best regards, Michael Schuetz
A.U.C. Brainwave

(Editors Note: This is a pretty good newsletter, written by Germans, but entirely in English. They have several things over there that we don't, and you get some reviews before the products hit the states.)

Dear Sir:

I obtained your name and address from the March 1987 issue of Analog Magazine. I am hoping your group can be of some assistance to me. I have an Atari 1040 ST and 1200XL. I am having problems using my printers to their fullest with both computers. My printers are as follows:

1. Epson FX-80 (no problems with this machine with either computer). 2. Star Micronics SB10 (24 pin, NLQ, high res graphics). 3. Silver Reed EXP 400 (daisy wheel) 4. Silver Reed EX 43N (with IF-44 interface ((typewriter with computer interface))

I am hoping someone in your group has similar printers and has found a printer driver which works for them. If there is any cost involved please let me know.

I have contacted the Star Micronics Company and they cannot help, but rather refer me to the software company. I have written to them but have not had a reply. I use Time Works Word Writer on the ST, Migraphs LabelMaster, DEGAS, Print Master Plus and Neochrome. On the 1200XL I use AtariWriter Plus, Print Shop (with all additional graphic disks) Time Works Data Manager, Super Mailer Plus (Royal) and Print Wiz. The 8-bit all run on the Epson as does the ST.

I am with the Air Force stationed in Japan and have been here for over 12 years now. We do not have access to an adequate BBS here and I cannot afford to call one long distance either. Myself and all the other Atari owners here must use mail order to obtain our hardware and software. If you can be of assistance, I would really appreciate it. Thanks for your time.

Curt Eddings
Box 2272
APO San Francisco, CA 96328
225-5053

Well, guess I have dribbled on for long enough. Hope to see you out at the Edgewater Mall show on the 26th and 27th. We are still looking for a couple of volunteers to help man our booth; and T-shirts with the groups name and Computer Users' Day '87, are available for the event for $5.50. If you are interested in helping out, or donating equipment for display, please give me a call before the 15th of June. (I love you Pamela!)

ATARI NEWS ... AND COMMENT Compiled by John Nagy, Michigan Atari Magazine

8-Bit Emulator for the ST to be released - with ATARI's approval! Hot news! Darek Mihocka has been given the green light for publishing and distributing his 'ST Transformer.'

Neil Harris, spokesman for Atari, has agreed (in a public message on the GEnie Atari SIG) to allow both USE and DISTRIBUTION of the Atari code within Darek's emulator. The permission is contingent on Darek's publishing the Source Code for his emulator, so that other programmers may be able to add their efforts. Neil says the object of this move is to increase the likelihood of a truly versatile, full-speed emulator.

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MORE TIDBITS FROM MICHIGAN!

As it stands now, the ST TRANSFORMER uses largely custom routines modeled after the Atari ROM, with some code grafted into the program at startup by a port of the Translator Disk (or, in another version, they are already within the emulator program.) That's what Atari had said that Darek could not legally do.

At the Buffalo AtariFest in late April, two user groups showed Darek's "ST Transformer" in operation. The author sent both the Genesee Atari Group and the Westmoreland Atari Computer Organization copies of the public domain emulator for demonstration only. Interest at both tables was brisk despite the incomplete state of the program and the current slowness of execution (20%-40% "normal" speed depending, on the program). Atari tried to ignore the demos.

WACO members quizzed Atari reps over the actual status of the Translator, which was sent to all registered user groups for free distribution. Sandi first said that it was not sent and remained Atari's property, then admitted that she didn't know for sure. At issue was what restrictions (if any) can now be put on the uses of the disks after years of free distribution.

An intriguing facet of the conflict appeared when a program called XLFIX, available for sale in Antic Magazine's public domain library, was found

to work as well or better than the original Atari disk. There are several other translators and operating systems available (both in the public domain and commercially - BOSSXL, NEWELL OSN, etc.) It appears that Atari would first have to legally assert ownership and control of all the "translators" in order to get any legal claim against Darek for using one or more of them in his 800 emulator.

The dark prospects of long and possibly unsuccessful legal action, together with petition drives, newsletter editorials, and comments running in most major telecommunication services and magazines - all in support of the ST TRANSFORMER - now seem to have gotten through to Atari.

In May, Neil Harris went on record saying that if Darek would only put his program source code in the public domain for further development by other programmers, then Atari would give their permission for use and distribution of their operating system.

Darek Mihocka was unwilling to release his source code as public domain, for he would then have given up any rights to his efforts. Fortunately, Atari softened their position, changing their demand to simply the Publishing of the code, with the rights to his work remaining with the author.

Darek had previously contacted

several other major Atari-interest magazines about the possibility of their publishing the Transformer and source code in copyrightable form, but was turned down by each. The main reason was Atari's vocal objection to the project and its legal questions. However, Neil stated in his May 15th messages that any magazine would be satisfactory, and that a formal proposal letter of permission would be sent within days. Richard Frick of Atari called to confirm this on May 20.

Darek will have the consent needed for any intereste. magazine to publish and distribute the Atari ROM with the emulator, as well as any parts of DOS and BASIC that may help. Availability time, publishing timetable, and even which magazine will offer the program can only be guessed at. It is clear that wherever it is printed, Atari wants no restrictions on distribution (i.e., ANTIC and its "no BBS" rule). Frick indicated that Atari could influence ANTIC on this issue for this particular program if necessary.

All the flap hasn't slowed Darek's progress on the continuously developing project. He added sound, GTIA graphics, DOS menus, joystick control, and yes, Player-Missile graphics to the already fairly capable emulator. The Player-missile routines were completed and donated by another sympathetic

programmer. Speed improvements continue to be made.

MORE ATARI NEWS Compiled by John Nagy, Michigan Atari Magazine

The Buffalo AtariFest at the end of April seemed down in attendance and involvement of vendors. Twenty-nine "vendor" areas included about seven user groups, with some notables as Hybrid Arts not attending. Atari didn't bring a Mega ST to he show, but they did bring the Laser Printer prototype. Organizers are upset with Atari over ads and money. It seems that Atari (finally) placed a major set of ads ONE WEEK before the show in the Buffalo area, but included the wrong date and wrong user group names... they corrected that in a Friday (day before show) ad that also included a line from some other AtariFest: "Children 12 and under free admit." The sponsors (Western New York Atari User Group and others) figure their losses at $500 as a result. It was also reported that Atari promised $4,000.00 in support money that has still (at this writing) not shown up. Atari may be trying to get "out from under" their commitment to more AtariFests, as their enthusiasm wanes.

Other promises made at the Buffalo Fest: "All" the new and announced products of Atari should be on the market by the end of June. Anybody taking odds on this? Atari will also "make an 8-bit disk drive announcement" at the Consumer Electronics show in June, says Neil Harris.

Atari's "promise without performance" of money for support is what made Detroit's M.A.C.E. club cancel their AtariFest. Word now is that the MAGIC club in Detroit has progressed with their plans and that there WILL be a Three-Day Detroit AtariFest in August.

Atari is making big strides on GEnie, a telecomputing service similar to Compuserve. Neil Harris and others from Atari make appearances regularly in the message bases and sometimes in weekly Roundtable open discussions. Atari users are invited to get an $18 saving on normal registration on GEnie (but no manual) by calling 1-800-638-8369 (with their modem) and entering HHH upon connection. At the U#- prompt, enter XJM11887.ATARI and press return.

Remember ZMAG? Compuserve users may have to either remember or else look elsewhere, because Ron Kovacs, editor of the popular free weekly online magazine, may no longer be using Compuserve in his distribution to over 200 Atari BBS's worldwide. On the other hand, ZMAG may soon be featured bigger than EVER on CIS. HUH? Sysops at the Atari SIG on CIS have repeatedly objected to items in ZMAG, including coverage of the 8-bit emulator. Then, Ron got demands to edit out any references to GEnie and Atari's involvement there. The last straw came when Ron tried to include information about other places ZMAG is available and Compuserve refused to post it. Business may be business, but Ron says that it's not news if it's censored, so Bye Bye CIS. Now, Atari SIG manager Ron Luks is apologizing to Ron and trying to offer Ron a reason to stay. Now what? Film at 11. ZMAG continues on GEnie, DELPHI, and other services. You can call Ron's BBS system to find your nearest ZMAG outlet (or to become one!) at 201-968-8148 (New Jersey)

THE WORLD OF ATARI by Jim Moran SLCC Journal

The SLCC is going to have an Expo after all. This one will be the first of a new type Expo, a regional one. Up to now, the Expo's have been set up for a fairly small area and the problems that Atari has run into trying to help set up a show every couple of weeks have been nothing short of monumental. The number of shows will probably drop, but the shows will be bigger and more interesting for all. By spacing out the shows there will be more time to set up more

interesting displays and more vendors will be able to attend as they won't have to stretch their costs quite so far. The shows will have a different name which is the title of this piece, THE WORLD OF ATARI. With this change of format and the greater involvement of Atari, there will be more of everything from Atari, more of the latest products and much more publicity - which should be beneficial to all the user groups in exposure to potential new members.

(ED Note: All of this change is news to me. We still haven't gotten written conformation of our show, just verbal approval. However, when I approached Sandi Austin in Dallas, she made like she had forgotten all about it. Lee Papas from Analog saved the day by asking her why she had not mentioned it to him for their listing of upcoming shows. He had remembered Neil Harris talking about how large and enthusiastic our group was, and how they were looking forward to heading towards the coast. Hmmmmm, hope they don't get cold feet with this new policy change.)

THINKING ABOUT COMPUTERS
By Bob Haynes

WHAT'S GREEN AND DANCES DIVINELY?

This space is not noted for how-to advice. Care has been taken to keep it innocent of "practical" application. The author therefore begs indulgence from you, the kind reader, for the present lapse from usually lofty standards. The subject at hand is color computing on the Atari, its potential as a tool, and the general failure to realize that potential. Let's begin with a couple of short routines:

LISTING 1

```
1 GR.2:POKE 710,0:POKE 752,1:FOR
Q-0 TO 255:FOR V-1 TO
999:NEXT V:? CHR$(125)? Q:POKE
712,Q:NEXT Q
```

LISTING 2

```
2 GR.2:POKE 710,0:POKE 752,1:FOR
Q-0 TO 255:INPUT#16,Q:?
CHR$(125)? Q-POKE 712,Q:NEXT Q
```

One reason why programmers under use Atari's color capabilities is the drudgery of searching through the 128 color palette for the right choices. Hence a majority of programs seem merely to fall back on the default blue screen, or at best a black-and-white one. These two routines are intended to encourage the greater use of color by reducing the tedium of the search. LISTING 1 rotates through the spectrum in about 7-1/4 minutes, matching each color to its corresponding POKE number. You will note that the screen changes color only on the even numbers. If you prefer

the SETCOLOR command, just divide by 16. The whole number quotient and the remainder will give you the color and luminance elements of the SETCOLOR command. LISTING 2 is an exploratory tool. Just type in any even number from 0 to 255 to study a static display at leisure. Repeat as often as desired, typing in other numbers. There's no error trapping in this routine, so you need to use a modicum of care when making entries. ST owners should be able to adapt these routines to the 512-color palette fairly easily.

A second reason why Atari's color capabilities are under utilized is a "what's the use" feeling engendered by the varied display screens in use. A color TV set and a color monitor do not show colors the same. The problem is compounded by the individual ways that users choose to adjust brightness and hues on their sets. A bright red on one screen may appear as a muddy brown or a dull purple on another. A few examples of the differences between a monitor display and a TV display:

COLOR	MONITOR #	TV #
green	180	198*
violet	82	88*
yellow	30*	44
orange	36	56
red	50	66
pink	54	74
olive green	210	194

An asterisk (*) after a number indicates that it is the best color of a bad lot, though hardly satisfactory. The monitor produces good violet, red, and green; the TV excels in the oranges and yellows. Both do a good job on the blues. The ideal way to do color programming is to hook up a monitor and a TV set at the same time (provided that the family will let you at the TV; if not, you can a: get a cheap color TV or b: get a new family). With the two types of display you can work out colors that look good on either one. As to ugly, some of the choices re ...how can we say it nicely...beyond major league ugly: they are all-star ugly.

In preparing this article, I obtained a deluxe box of 64 crayons, half the choice the Atari String One gives. About half the colors in the box are useful; the other half are virtual duplicates of one or another of the useful ones, at least to the casual eye. If it is the case that my typical American eye makes a distinction among only two or three dozen colors, are 128 a bit of overkill? How about 512 on the ST? Or 4,096 on some competitors' machines? Or the quarter million on the new IBM line? A quarter million? Sifting through that many colors could make a life's career for someone. The point is, the String One Atari has been around for over seven years with a 128/256 color palette.

There still remains much unexplored territory in that realm of color. Graphics modes 3-15 have barely been touched, for instance. Increasing the number of available colors by a factor of four or thirty-two or two thousand may be an application of gold paint to an already overgilded lily.

(Answer to the title question for the benefit of readers under the age of 30: Fred Asparagus.)

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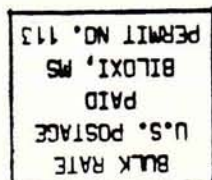
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